

30-Minute Neck Pillows: Go Back-to-School in Style

Editor: Liz Johnson

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These little bow-tie shaped neck pillows are super for proppin' up your noggin as you watch TV or read in bed... or finish a last minute term paper on your laptop. They're also great for supporting your neck while sleeping. This is one of our original designs and remains a perennial favorite. They have the *perfect* contour and softness to cradle your head and neck in comfort. In fact, this project comes with a warning: once you make one and share it with friends and family, you'll be on the hook to make many, many more. Good thing you can finish one in under an hour.



Reactions are likely to run the gamut from *love it to get your own* to *gentle snoring*. If you make one for everyone, they'll be less of a struggle. In fact, if you're sending off someone to dorm life, be prepared to make enough for the whole floor!



We've made countless of these as gifts, and use them ourselves every night. If you like a cool, crisp pillow, use a quality 100% cotton décor fabric. If you're looking for warm and cozy, try flannel or plush fleece. Overall, we recommend a slightly heavier fabric for the best, longest-lasting results, although our samples in quilting weight cotton have also turned out nicely.



Many people tell us how well-received this pillow is by seniors or those who must spend many hours seated or in bed. It offers therapeutic support for the neck, allowing those hard-working muscles to relax.



Despite the complex-looking shape, our bow-tie pillow is super easy to make. As mentioned above, this thoughtful gift only takes only about 30 minutes, start to finish.



The loop handles at either end are the perfect length to grasp and adjust the pillow into your perfect position.

Each pillow finishes at approximately 16" with a 14" circumference at the center and a 22" circumference at the ends.

Our thanks to [Fabric Depot](#) for originally providing the gorgeous cotton/linen blend fabrics from the Echino collection by Kokka for this set of three color-poppin' pillows. The drape of this cotton/linen blend fabric was wonderful to work with, and the rich colors and dramatic motifs were fun to fussy cut.

Sewing Tools You Need



Janome DC2015

- ✧ 60 built-in stitches
- ✧ One-hand needle threader
- ✧ Stylish red and white case design

JANOME
WHAT'S NEXT

We



- [Sewing Machine](#) and standard presser foot

Fabric and Other Supplies



- ½ yard of 45"+ wide fabric per pillow – we recommend a slightly heavier décor weight, although we have made options with standard quilting weight cottons. We've also done successful sets in and cotton sateen.

NOTE: *While ½ yard is sufficient for one pillow, if you select one a fabric with a large motif as we did for these samples, we recommend getting ¾ to a full yard for the very best fussy cutting options. The photo below shows how we carefully mapped out the cuts for one of our pillows.*



- ⅔ yard of ¾" to 1" ribbon or tape per pillow; *we used a twill tape in natural for this set, you could also use grograin ribbon, suede or even make a matching tie from the same fabric*
- ONE medium bag of premium polyester fiber fill; *we used Polyfil® 100% Premium Polyester Fiberfill by Fairfield*
- All-purpose thread to match fabric
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Seam gauge
- Seam ripper
- Straight pins
- Hand sewing needle

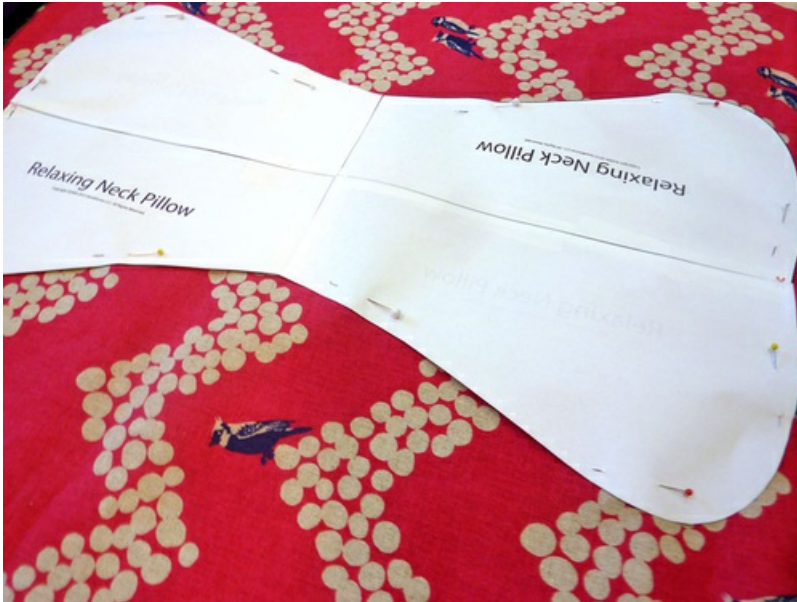
Getting Started

1. Download and print FOUR copies of our **Neck Pillow Pattern**.

IMPORTANT: *This pattern is ONE 8½" x 11" sheet. You must print the PDF file at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide line on the page to confirm your printout is the correct size.*

2. Cut out the pattern pieces along the solid lines.
3. Butt the four pattern pieces together, flipping two of the four pieces, to make one bow-tie shaped pattern piece. Do NOT overlap. Tape in place.
4. Using the assembled pattern, cut THREE pieces.

NOTE: *As mentioned above, a careful fussy cut is a good option, but also remember to pay attention to whether your fabric has nap (like fleece) or any directional print to insure everything is oriented correctly.*



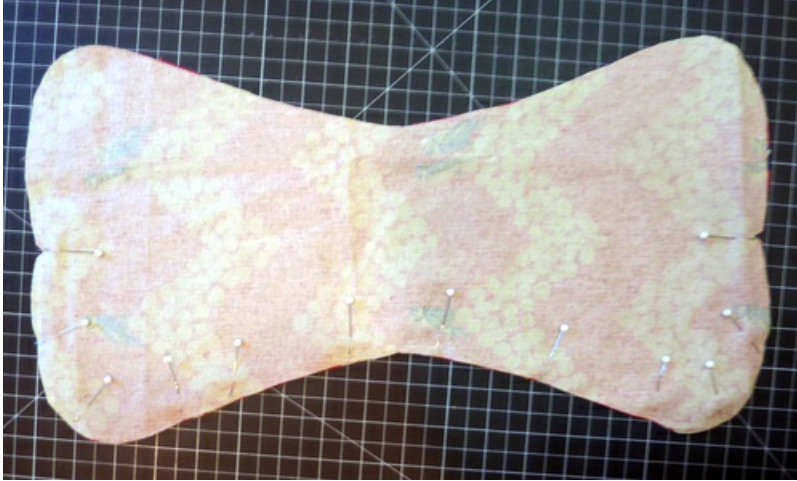
5. You'll see an * on either end of your assembled pattern piece. On each of your three pieces, make a small V-shaped cut, about ⅜" in depth and width, at these two symbols. These are the points where you start/stop stitching and attach the center of your ribbon handles. While you can use a marking pencil, we've found this V-clip is easier to spot while sewing.



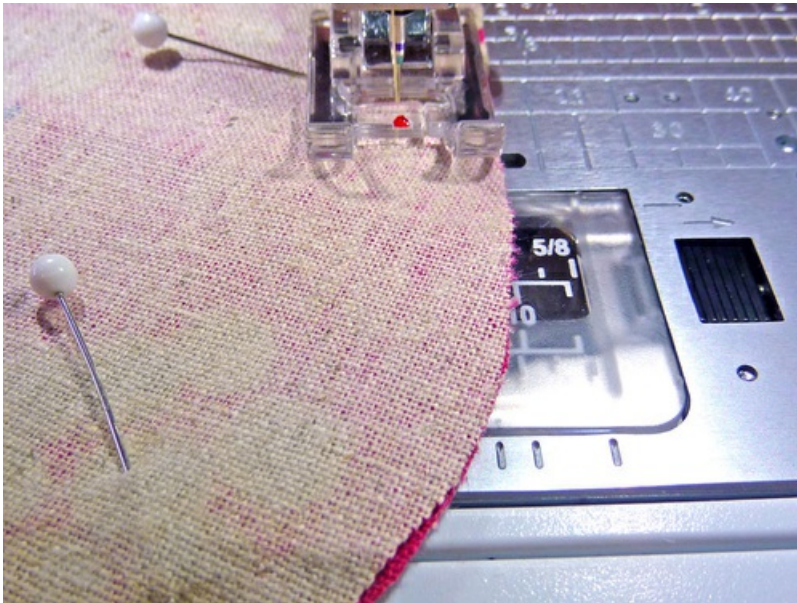
6. Cut the ribbon/tape in half into two 12" lengths.

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

1. This pillow is essentially a chubby triangle, which is helpful to keep in mind as you are assembling; you need three sides to create the correct dimension.
2. Pin two of your three pieces of cut fabric right sides together along one side, from one V-clip to the opposite V-clip.



3. Using a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance, stitch from the *precise center point of the V* on one side to precisely that same point on the opposite side. The other side remains open. Because of the narrow seam allowance and the curves, sew slowly to assure your stitching line is even and accurate. You might want to slightly reduce your stitch length for a smoother curve and tighter seam. For more about this technique, check out our full tutorial on [Sewing Smooth Curves Every Time](#).



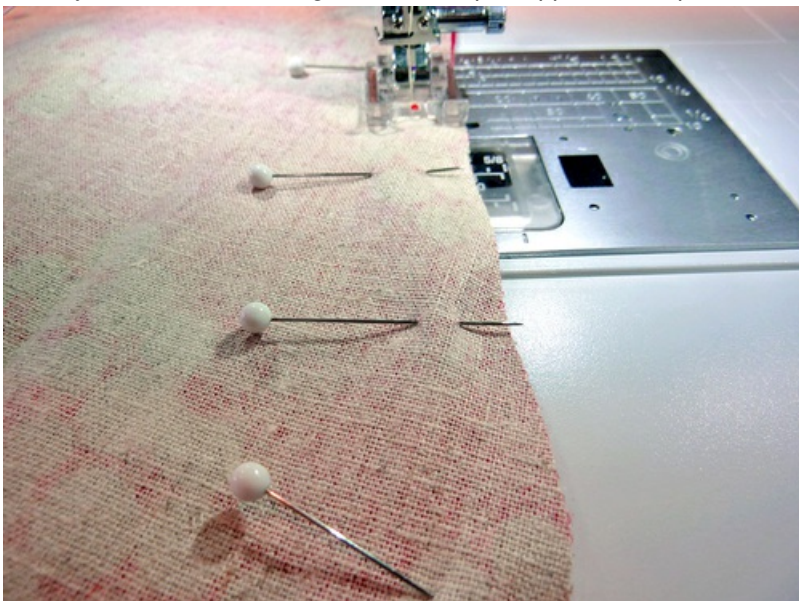
4. Loop each 12" length of ribbon/tape in half to form a handle, aligning the raw ends. Pin the raw ends in place at the center of each V-clip with the loop falling to the inside.



5. Place your third fabric piece into position against the remaining raw edges of the original two pieces, matching all the curves and sandwiching the loops between the layers.



6. Stitch your *second* seam, again from V-clip to opposite V-clip.



7. You are starting and stopping the seam to include **half** of the ribbon/tape as shown below. Backstitch over the ribbon/tape to give it extra security to hold up to its job of tugging the pillow into position.



8. Pin your remaining open seam as shown, leaving a 3" - 4" opening along the inner curve for turning right side out and inserting the filler.



9. Stitch the third and final seam from one V-clip to the opposite V-clip. As before, remember to backstitch over the ribbon/tape for strength and remember to lock your seam at either side of the 3" - 4" opening.
10. Turn the cover right side out. Use a long, blunt-end tool, such as a chopstick or knitting needle, to gently round out all the curves. Pull the loops out into position at either end.



11. Press in the raw edges of the opening so they are flush with the sewn seam.



12. Stuff with filler until pleasingly plump but not so rock hard it's uncomfortable.



13. Pin the seam allowance at the opening ...



14. ... and hand stitch closed.



15. When finished, a comfortably stuffed pillow looks about like this:



Project Design and Instructional Outline: Alicia Thommas
Sample Creation: Debbie Guild

Pillows & Cushions

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